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INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT Discipline, Working Conditions, and Morale in a Soviet Prison Camp

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[redacted]

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION FOR THE RESEARCH USE OF TRAINED INTELLIGENCE ANALYSTS

25X1 [redacted]

1. [redacted]

25X1 [redacted] the camps are organized very much like a military organization. [redacted]
25X1 especially [redacted] the Pechora prison, with the secret number AA-1.
25X1 The headquarters in Moscow for all prisoner slave labor camps is named GULAG. This is a section of the MVD which runs all prison camps.

2. [redacted]

25X1 Pechora camp is under the GUZhDS, which is the GULAG section in charge of rail-
25X1 road camps. The commander of GUZhDS was Gen Frenkel. There is also a section
25X1 that takes care of mine work, and a section for farm camps. They are all con-
25X1 nected with MVD. For instance, the name of our camp was Pechora Prison MVD.
This camp stretches out over 466 km from the southwestern to the northeastern end of the Pechora railroad, from Kozhva to Vorkuta. /Map of Area is enclosed with this report./ The camp is sub-divided into units, somewhat like regiments. The camp commandant is in the central region. He wears an MVD uniform. His title is Special Major, MVD. He has three or four assistant commandants, all officers of the MVD. Every assistant commandant has a few different sections — food section, an engineer section, dairy farm section, transport section, finance section, food section — in all, 10 or 12 sections. Every camp also has
25X1 an MVD guard section. [redacted] the commandant of the Pechora was a Col Barrowitzki. The one before him was Uspenski.

3. [redacted]

25X1 [redacted] Maj Gen Frenkel is the head of the GUZhDS, which controls all railroad camps.
25X1 Maj Part was head of the transport section at Pechora. [redacted] Falkenstein was head of four or five sections. Maj Artomonoff was head of the personnel section.

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4. 25X1 [redacted] the camp commander and his assistant commandants are usually members of the Communist Party. But this is not always so. The assistant commandant, for instance, was a former convict, and therefore not able to join the party.

5. [redacted]

25X1 [redacted] although in 1945 and 1946 some ex-prisoners were used as guards. However, they were not supplied with firearms, just sticks. These were only criminal prisoners, of course. Usually the camp commander is a free man, but in 1948 many commanders were former prisoners. The camp I am talking about had a commandant who came from Finland, who had been sentenced for such things as speculation and hooliganism. Under this commandant there are different sections, such as bookkeeper, an economist, and a man who directs the prisoners, more or less as a foreman. Then there is an assistant commandant for the food, kitchen and baking, a nurse, and a medical post. Of course, there is the guard section with a number of guards equal to 10% of the number of prisoners.

6. 25X1 [redacted]

25X1 [redacted] There is a commissar in the camp, and everybody is under control of the commissar. This political commissar checks up on all the officers in the camp, just like the political commissars in the army. He holds political conferences. He controls the work of the camp. Everybody, from the commandant on down, is under the control of the commissar. The commissar, so to speak, constitutes a little Politburo. If the commandant does something which is not in keeping with the party line, the "secretary" writes back to Moscow, and the commandant is called back. The commissar is a representative of the Politburo in Moscow.

7. [redacted]

8.

9. 25X1 [redacted] As commandant of the camp, the commandant was the highest person, but as a party member he was under the control of the commissar. Usually the relation was all right since both were Communists. However, if the commissar did not like the commandant he only had to write a letter back to Moscow and the commandant would be recalled. So, in the last analysis, the party secretary always has the final say.

10. 25X1 [redacted]

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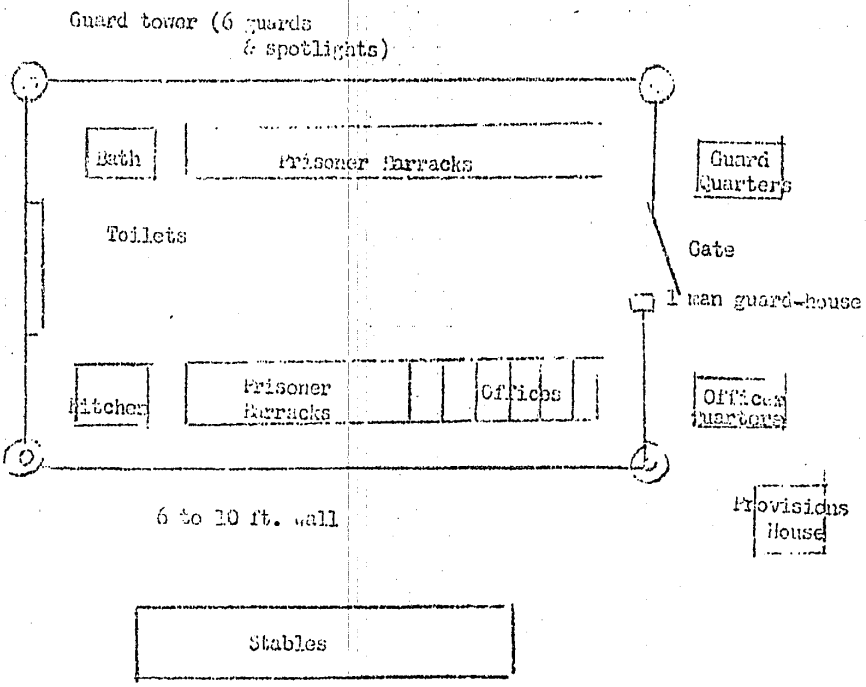
The enclosures hold 250 men and are all built this way:



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Camps are divided into many units. Our camp had five units: one in Pechora, the second in Kas-Yu, the third in Kochmes, the fourth in Sivaya Laska, and the fifth in Khanovey. A unit had eight to 15 thousand laborers. Every unit has the same sections as the main camp, depending on how many jobs there are. Mostly the heads of those

25X1

sections are ex-convicts, who 10 years ago were free and did not want to go back to the big cities. The units are divided into sub-camps of 200 to 300 laborers, each with a territory of about 100 km along the railroad. About 1940, the political and the criminal prisoners were separated, and the foreign prisoners were separated from the Russian prisoners, but later all were put together again. In 1947, about 70% were political prisoners. Many came from Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland when the war ended.

25X1

21. [redacted]

In 1942 a mobilisation was started. Only criminal prisoners could go to the army, except bandits, and prisoners who had been convicted of stealing from the Government under a paragraph enacted in 1932. Of course, everybody wanted to go.

22. [redacted]

25X1

23. [redacted]

25X1 there were special female camps. In a female camp there are about 200 women and about 25 to 30 men. And then, of course, there are three or four women in every men's camp to work at the baths and in the kitchen. Most of the women work at the dairy farm.

24. [redacted]

25X1 The youngest was 14. They get easy jobs in the kitchen or something like that. The young prisoners are usually criminal prisoners. The youngest political prisoner was a woman of 18 from Latvia.

25. [redacted]

25X1

26. [redacted]

27. [redacted]

[redacted] many were professors, teachers, engineers, or physicians, and most of them were convicted of speaking against the Soviet Government -- paragraph 58/10 -- or of Paragraph 58/7 -- economic counter-revolution -- which usually meant that they were big directors and had made some mistake in their factory control.

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28. [redacted]

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25X1

29. [redacted]

25X1

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25X1

41. [redacted]

25X1 For prisoners who worked at difficult work there was 700 /grams/ of bread, 25 grams of oatmeal, two grams of sugar, and 100 grams of fish -- mostly salt fish. If somebody worked more than 100% of his quota he got more food. The guards got the prisoners up at five o'clock in the morning. Breakfast consisted of bread, soup, and salt fish, in quantities according to the kind of work you did. Most prisoners had to cut about four cubic meters of wood; this constituted their quota. If they did more, for instance 125%, the economist computed the percentage and the next day more food was issued in accordance with his percentage. The prisoners used to work in groups of 25 to 30 under a foreman. This foreman showed how the work should be done; he did not work himself, but only supervised. The regular ration of food changed every year. Before the war it was a little better, then it became worse and towards the end of the war it became better again. The worker who made 100% of his quota received per day 700 grams of bread, 125 grams of corn or oats, 120 grams of fish, 2 grams of oil, 2 grams of sugar, and 600 grams of vegetables, usually turnips. In the morning one got all the bread, a liter of soup from the corn, and 100 grams of fish. In the evening you got soup and vegetables.

42. [redacted]

25X1

43. [redacted]

25X1 In 1941, when this camp began, they had 120 cows. In the winter we had very little milk, and in the summer the milk would often turn sour because of bad transportation. The milk went to the railroad for civilian workers -- for children, mostly. In Russia if you don't work you don't eat.

44. [redacted]

25X1

45. [redacted]

46. [redacted]

25X1 The guards never touched the workers. If you did not want to work, the foreman told the head of the guard unit when you came back to the camp at night and you were taken to the isolation cell. This is a small place made of wood, with no heat. The food was two one-liter bowls of soup and some black bread. All your clothes, except underclothes, were

25X1 taken away.

47. [redacted]

The camp commandant would come by every day and ask whether you had changed your mind. Usually the longest time in isolation was 10 days. After that you were taken

25X1 out, interrogated by an MVD officer, and usually sentenced under Paragraph 58-10 to another three years at hard labor for sabotage. It was possible

25X1 to receive another sentence while still serving the first one, [redacted]

25X1 [redacted]

25X1

25X1

it was forbidden to touch the prisoners. However, this prohibition is not always enforced and sometimes the foreman, who is usually a criminal prisoner, beats his wards if they don't want to go to work.

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[redacted]

25X1

[redacted]

25X1

[redacted] Some people from 160th Construction Company working on the railroad in the Murmansk region came to my camp and told us that the soldiers used to throw food packages and cigarettes to them. That was, of course, because practically every family has a member in a prison camp somewhere, and the soldiers never knew but that their father, or mother, or brother, or sister, were among the group. You see, in Russia there are three kinds of people: those who are in prisoner camps, those who have been in prisoner camps, and those who are going to be in prisoner camps.

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[redacted]

25X1

[redacted] Many of them were convicted of anti-Soviet propaganda, critizing any aspect of Russia, and many of them were convicted of discipline violations. These discipline violations consisted of overstaying leave time by one or two days, which brought on a sentence of 10 years of hard labor. All these military convictions were under Paragraph 193; thus, by looking at the files, one can always recognize former army personnel because they are convicted under Paragraph 193.

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25X1

It was a matter of your previous experience, not a matter of political affiliations or sympathies. These were hardly ever mentioned, since everyone knew that it made no difference what one said while one was in the camp. The commanders were very much aware that anyone would profess to be a Communist, if he thought for a moment that it would help him get out of the camp. This was especially true in the Pechora camp, where there were about 50% political prisoners, of whom 95% used to be professional workers, and where the other 50% consisted of people from collective farms, who had stolen or robbed. Politics were hardly ever mentioned, and specialists got their jobs because of their qualifications. By "educated people" I mean those who could read a newspaper intelligently, and who could talk about politics sensibly. These political prisoners, of course, had nothing good to expect from the commandant or the MVD. They kept very quiet and never tried to talk themselves into jobs by professing a change of heart.

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25X1

During the war many of the guards were older people who felt very sorry for the prisoners and were kind to them. The Mongols, and generally the younger guards, are not so kind. The Mongols and the Caucasians are the worst guards. There were many Mongols and not so many Caucasians.

25X1 80.

25X1

25X1 Stalin made two great mistakes during this war. The first one was to show the Russians the outside world, and the other one was to show the outside world to the Russians.

81.

25X1

The youths get fine Communist instruction but are not very enthusiastic about it because they do not have enough to eat. Here is an example of the standard of living of a free man who was working in the northern region near our camp. He was a former professor who had been sentenced for three years and had decided to stay on in the camp as a free man after his sentence had been finished. He was an ex-Communist and knew that if he returned to the region where he used to live he would be picked up again on the slightest provocation and given another prison term. This man earned one thousand rubles per month, but because of the government savings bonds which he was obliged to buy, he actually received 650. He had to spend at least 20% of his pay on war bonds. Every month he had to spend 75 rubles for 21 kg of bread, 12 rubles for 1½ kg of rice, about 120 rubles for 1.8 kg of butter, 31 rubles for two kg of sugar, 250 rubles for seven kg of meat, 36 rubles for 18 kg of vegetables, and 27 rubles for 15 liters of milk. That leaves him about 200 rubles for clothes, room, and amusement — and he is still hungry.

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25X1 The Government needs a cheap labor supply. It very often happens that within a certain region the NKVD chief is ordered to supply a certain number of prisoners for a certain project. He then goes out and makes the arrests. For instance, when the great constructions were going on along the Amur and near Lake Baikal, people used to be taken out of their homes at night and transported to prison camps without further ado after being sentenced for some fictitious reason. The Caucasians were usually sent to the Far East and to special camps in the Far North.

93.

25X1 in 1944 we received two companies of German railroad workers and

25X1 one company of truck drivers but they did not last very long because the climate was too severe. The truck drivers were used to drive wood from the forest to the railroad. This process was continued even after the railroad was finished because the road-bed keeps sinking into the tundra. This constant reinforcement of the railroad was accomplished without interference with the traffic. Most of the reconstruction was done in the summer.

94.

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97.

25X1 America was by far the most popular of all. But people don't talk much about those matters. When one Russian meets another it is usually "What did you have to eat today? How much bread did you get yesterday? What are you going to eat tomorrow? Where can I get an extra package of cigarettes?" etc.

25X1

98. [redacted]

25X1 [redacted] Vorkuta. It is built of wooden buildings. The population consists of many ex-convicts, many Russian-Germans who escaped to this place to work in the mines, and engineers who came to work on the railroad. Many of the people including veterans, came because the provisions in the North Arctic were considerably better than the provisions in the south. And then, of course, there are the prisoners, who work in chain-gangs in Vorkuta. Nevertheless, Vorkuta is one of the best equipped cities of the north. [redacted] drawings of the theater there, and it is better than many theaters in the interior. Also, the food for the prisoners is better, because they work in the mines. All products from the dairy farms in this area go to Vorkuta.

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99. [redacted]

25X1

100. [redacted]

101. [redacted]

102. [redacted]

103. [redacted]

104. [redacted]

25X1 Since 1939 no large new towns have been established. Vorkuta is the largest and newest town, and it was completed around 1930. There are innumerable Eskimo villages along the river, each consisting of approximately 30 to 40 houses with about 200 people in each town. These Eskimos live mainly by hunting and animal breeding. There are also some villages along the Pechora river, composed of people who had been exiled from Russia about 1930.

105. [redacted]

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106. [redacted]

25X1 [redacted] some people were evacuated to this area in 1944 and 1945, but they later returned to their homes and other parts of Russia.

25X1

25X1

107. [redacted]

25X1 [redacted] During the war there were usually more women on the farms because the men had gone into the army. It is my experience in Russia that women do more work, and work harder, than men, especially on the collective farms. Women take care of the cattle, sow the crops, and reap the harvest. Women do everything; they even go into the forest and cut wood.

25X1

108. [redacted]

25X1

109. [redacted]

110. [redacted]

111. [redacted]

25X1 [redacted] concentrates for the cattle and vegetables for the people are imported. The Eskimos live mainly on raw fish, raw reindeer meat, and turnips. Fishing in this area is very good, and I wouldn't be surprised if after some capital investment it would turn into one of the highest fish-producing states of the Soviet Union.

25X1

112. [redacted]

About 800 thousand Eskimos and a million and a half prisoners.

113. [redacted]

About 60 thousand. In 1941 they brought many Germans from the Volga, especially to the forest. Conditions were terrible. Others came from the occupation zone because in the winter night the work was better than in Russia. The food ration was larger and the people had more chance, especially the railroad workers. An engineer earned

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25X1

two or three times more money.

114. [redacted]

115. [redacted]

116. [redacted]

117. [redacted]

118. [redacted]

The prison life was very bad. In 1941, 1942, and 1943, we got old clothes from the army. Many of the workers went out and froze their feet. Of 200 thousand prisoners, we lost 50 thousand.

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119. [redacted]

25X1

120. [redacted]

25X1

Leather is not good. It lets the humidity through. The best trousers are made from cotton. I recommend waterproof cotton cloth which would not let water through, like the ones I have seen American soldiers wear. The Russians used cotton between linen cloth. I do not recommend socks, but linen material that you wrap around your feet and legs over which the felt boots are drawn. For more insulation you pad the boots with paper. Deerskin, full-length boots with fur on the outside are used by the Komi natives -- these aren't good for working. They are very warm and best used when traveling, but they don't wear as well.

121. [redacted]

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- end -

Enclosures: Map of Pechora-Vorkuta Railroad, Komi ASSR

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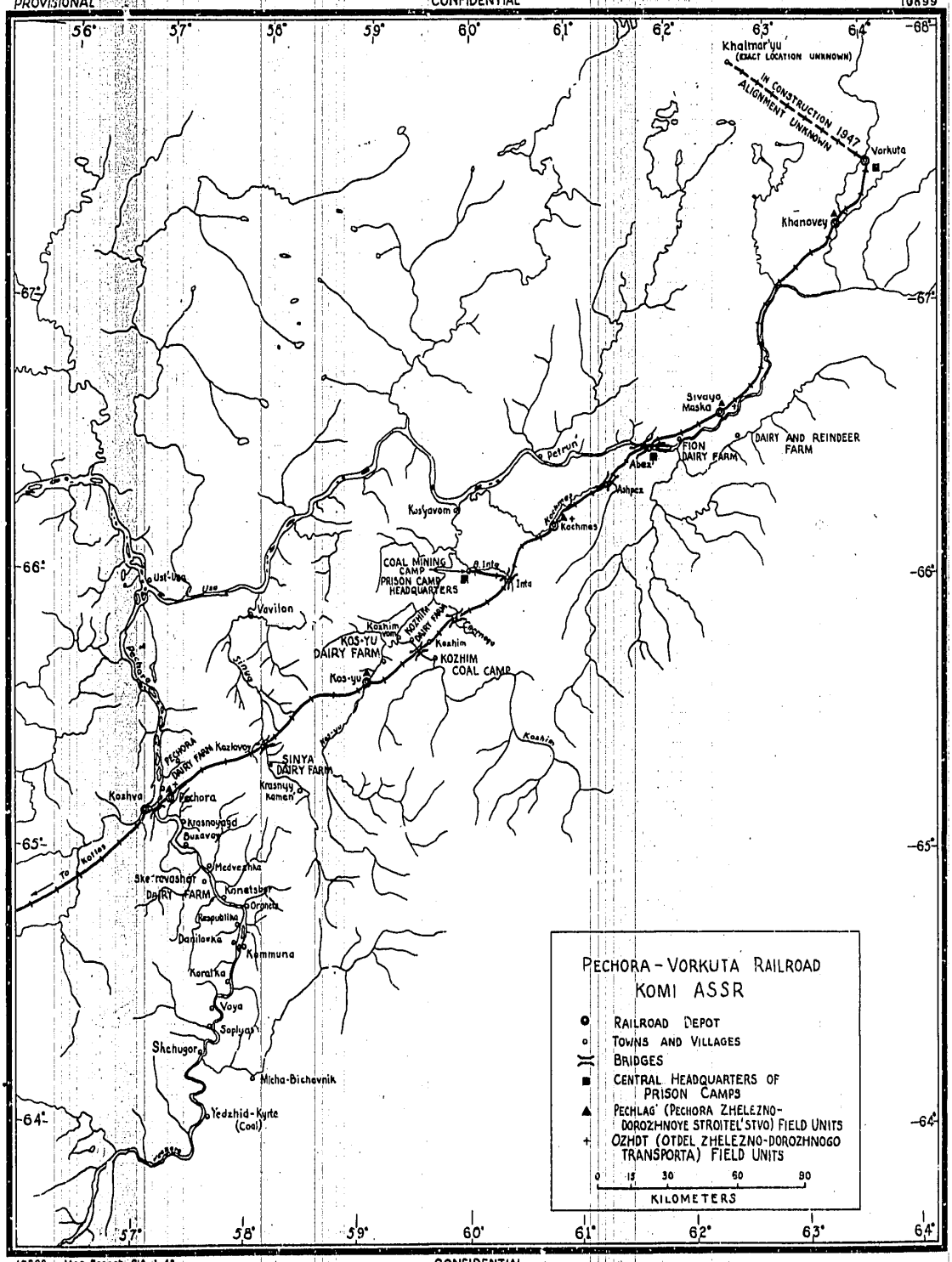

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